

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/645,850
Amendment filed April 10, 2006
Reply to OA dated January 11, 2006

REMARKS

Claims 5 - 8, 11, 12 and 17 - 19 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1 - 4, 9, 10, 13 - 16 and 20 - 25 remain in this patent application.

Claims 1, 3, 9, 10 and 13 - 16 have been amended, and claims 21 - 25 have been added in order to more particularly point out, and distinctly claim the subject matter to which the applicants regard as their invention. The applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added. It is believed that this Amendment is fully responsive to the Office Action dated January 11, 2006.

The applicants thank the Examiner for now indicating that claims 11 - 16 contain allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in the manner suggested in item 4, page 7 of the outstanding Action. As suggested by the Examiner, the applicants have incorporated allowable claim 11 and the intervening claims (claims 5 and 7) into independent claim 1, and further incorporated allowable claim 12 and the intervening claims (claims 6 and 8) into new independent claim 21 (including the subject of independent claim 1).

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The intervening claims 5 - 8 and claims 11 and 12 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, while claims 9, 10 and 13 - 16 have been amended in order to change their respective dependencies.

Claims 21 - 25 have been added. Independent claim 24 incorporates therein claims 1, 6, 8 and 12, while claims 22 - 25 reflect original claims 2 - 4 and 20, respectively, except for their dependencies on new independent claim 21.

In view of the above, pending claims 1 - 4, 9, 10, 13 - 16 and 20 - 25 should now be allowed.

In the outstanding Action, first, claims 1 - 8 and 17 - 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyashita (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0101790) in view of Yamada (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0172107).

Second, claims 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Miyashita in view of Yamada, and further in view of Matsumoto (U.S. Patent No. 5,701,282).

The applicants respectfully request reconsideration of these rejections.

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As to the first obviousness rejection, independent claim 1 now includes the allowable subject matter of claim 11, while each of claims 2 - 4 and 20 depends on allowable independent claim 1 and claims 5 - 8 and 17 - 19 have been canceled. Thus, the outstanding rejection of claims 1 - 8 and 17 - 20 is now moot.

Furthermore, as to the second obviousness rejection, claims 9 and 10 depend on independent claims 1 and 21, respectively, independent claims 1 and 21 containing the allowable subject matters of claims 11 and 12, respectively. Thus, the outstanding rejection of claims 9 and 10 is now similarly moot.

In view of the above, the withdrawal of the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Miyashita (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0101790) in view of Yamada (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0172107), and the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Miyashita in view of Yamada, and further in view of Matsumoto (U.S. Patent No. 5,701,282) is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

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If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,
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